

Plain Words on
The Incarnation
and
the Sacraments
of the Gospel

VERNON STALEY



Class 232.15Q

Book S+16

General Theological Seminary Library

Chelsea Square, New York

PRESENTED BY

Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning



22
22

Plain Words on
The Incarnation,
and
the Sacraments
of the Gospel.

BY THE
REV. VERNON STALEY,
Author of "The Catholic Religion," etc.

WITH A PREFACE

BY THE REV. T. T. CARTER,
*Hon. Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and Warden of the
House of Mercy, Clewer.*

THIRD EDITION.

"Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself."

Isaiah xlv. 15.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO.
OXFORD: 106, S. Aldate's Street;
LONDON: 64 & 65, Farringdon Street, E.C.
1901.

232.15 Q

St 16

61590

YAMBOO GET JOO
YAMBOO

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE kindly welcome accorded to my *Plain Words on the Holy Catholic Church* (Skeffington), together with the encouragement of one whom I greatly revere, has led me to write this treatise on the Incarnation and the Sacraments.

I set before myself the task of making the Incarnation and its results a reality to simple folk. I am conscious that I have grievously failed in realizing my ideal. The subject, in some of its parts, is so profound as to baffle attempts to treat it plainly and simply. Such as my work is, I commend it to the blessing of Him of whom it speaks, and in whose honour it is written, making the prayer of St. Augustine my own:—

“O Lord, the one God, whatever I have said in this book that is of thine, may they acknowledge who are thine; if anything of my own, may it be pardoned both by thee and by those who are thine.”

I desire to acknowledge great obligations to

Wilberforce's *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, a work which I have quoted and used perhaps more freely than I realize. In Lectures ii. and iii. of Part I. this is specially the case. The latter part of Lecture iv. Part I., is drawn mainly from the Rev. T. T. Carter's *Our Lord's Early Life*, Chapter V.

V. S.

St. Beatenberg,
July 27th, 1892.

PREFACE.

THE Author of this work is already known by a former publication of a similar character on the subject of the Church, as viewed in its relation to the Sects. In this further exposition of doctrine, he has gone into the foundations on which the Church rests for its very existence, the Incarnation of God, and the Sacraments of living Grace, which the Church enshrines.

We hold the Church to be the organization of which the Episcopate, the Creeds, and the Sacraments are the essential parts—the Incarnation being “the chief corner-stone,” or rather the foundation, “the rock,” sustaining them with their substantial, vivifying graces.

It seems very necessary at this present time to express forcibly and in unmistakable language the truth of this great mystery, and of the operations through which God has designed to convey its powers and its virtues to the souls of men. There ought to be no mistake on these points, nor as to the Church’s claims, not for its own self-exaltation, but for the security of the promises, and the certainty of Scriptural truth, which has been declared

by those who of old time "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In the divisions of the present age, whether or no individual minds be led to speculate on divine mysteries, as though they were of uncertain sound, and however the pressure of restless controversy may distract and unsettle waverers, yet the Church's witness to the truth committed to its guardianship, and the language of its sacred formularies, remain what they ever were, clear and unshaken. It cannot be too strongly or too persistently put forward, that in this witness we find the one sure means of salvation for our fallen race.

These primary truths are set forth in the following pages in as simple language as the sacred subjects admit of, and in a mode of statement which has been learnt by long experience. The work, as far as I can judge, is well calculated to instruct and impress the minds of those whom more elaborate treatises may not reach, and to whom they would be less acceptable. I venture to recommend it as a valuable exposition of a great subject viewed under different aspects, and this as I believe, truly and faithfully.

T. T. CARTER.

Clewer,

October, 1892.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

The Incarnation.

LECTURE	PAGE
INTRODUCTION - - - - -	3
I. THE DIVINE NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST -	7
II. THE HUMAN NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST -	11
III. THE UNION OF THE DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES - - - - -	17
IV. THE HUMAN AGENT IN THE INCARNATION -	22
V. THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION (1) -	29
VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION (2) -	34
VII. THE WITNESS OF THE INCARNATION TO THE CHARACTER OF GOD - - - - -	39

PART II.

The Sacraments.

LECTURE	PAGE
I. THE SACRAMENTS, THE EXTENSION OF THE INCARNATE LIFE - - - - -	47
II. THE NECESSITY OF THE SACRAMENTS -	52
Holy Baptism.	
III. THE REMEDY FOR BIRTH SIN (1) - - -	57
IV. THE REMEDY FOR BIRTH SIN (2) - - -	62
Holy Communion.	
V. INTRODUCTION - - - - -	66
VI. ITS NECESSITY - - - - -	70
VII. THE REAL PRESENCE (1) - - - - -	74
VIII. THE REAL PRESENCE (2) - - - - -	79
The Eucharistic Sacrifice.	
IX. THE MEMORIAL BEFORE GOD (1) - - -	84
X. THE MEMORIAL BEFORE GOD (2) - - -	89
XI. THE MEMORIAL BEFORE MAN - - - - -	93

by those who of old time "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In the divisions of the present age, whether or no individual minds be led to speculate on divine mysteries, as though they were of uncertain sound, and however the pressure of restless controversy may distract and unsettle waverers, yet the Church's witness to the truth committed to its guardianship, and the language of its sacred formularies, remain what they ever were, clear and unshaken. It cannot be too strongly or too persistently put forward, that in this witness we find the one sure means of salvation for our fallen race.

These primary truths are set forth in the following pages in as simple language as the sacred subjects admit of, and in a mode of statement which has been learnt by long experience. The work, as far as I can judge, is well calculated to instruct and impress the minds of those whom more elaborate treatises may not reach, and to whom they would be less acceptable. I venture to recommend it as a valuable exposition of a great subject viewed under different aspects, and this as I believe, truly and faithfully.

T. T. CARTER.

Clewer,

October, 1892.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

The Incarnation.

LECTURE	PAGE
INTRODUCTION - - - - -	3
I. THE DIVINE NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST -	7
II. THE HUMAN NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST -	11
III. THE UNION OF THE DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES - - - - -	17
IV. THE HUMAN AGENT IN THE INCARNATION -	22
V. THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION (1) -	29
VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION (2) -	34
VII. THE WITNESS OF THE INCARNATION TO THE CHARACTER OF GOD - - - - -	39

PART II.

The Sacraments.

LECTURE	PAGE
I. THE SACRAMENTS, THE EXTENSION OF THE INCARNATE LIFE - - - - -	47
II. THE NECESSITY OF THE SACRAMENTS -	52
Holy Baptism.	
III. THE REMEDY FOR BIRTH SIN (1) - - -	57
IV. THE REMEDY FOR BIRTH SIN (2) - - -	62
Holy Communion.	
V. INTRODUCTION - - - - -	66
VI. ITS NECESSITY - - - - -	70
VII. THE REAL PRESENCE (1) - - - - -	74
VIII. THE REAL PRESENCE (2) - - - - -	79
The Eucharistic Sacrifice.	
IX. THE MEMORIAL BEFORE GOD (1) - - -	84
X. THE MEMORIAL BEFORE GOD (2) - - -	89
XI. THE MEMORIAL BEFORE MAN - - - -	93

PART I.

The Incarnation.

“THE MYSTERY OF THE DIVINE INCARNATION IS THE
VASTEST AND MOST PROFOUND OF ALL THE WAYS OF
GOD.”

INTRODUCTION.

“What think ye of Christ?”—*St. Matt.* xxii. 42.

THERE is perhaps no question of greater importance than that which Jesus Christ addressed to the Pharisees in the words, “What think ye of Christ?” Its importance arises from the fact, that it has to do with the honour and glory of God and with the salvation of man, in a way in which no other question has. We shall never give God the love which is His due, nor will our hope of salvation rest secure, until we know who Jesus Christ is, and what He is to us.

“What think ye of Christ?” Is He man, or is He more than man? and, if so, how much more than man? Is He God, or is He less than God? and, if so, how much less than God?

There is but one answer to such questions, and we find that answer in the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is of this doctrine, and its bearing upon our salvation, that we purpose to treat in these pages.

To write simply and yet exactly upon a subject so deep as that of the Incarnation is a task of great difficulty. At the outset, the reader is asked not to put this book aside, because of the depth of the truths of which it treats. He is asked to read patiently and thoughtfully, with a resolve to be of the number of those who "believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ." For the reader's encouragement it may be said, that a mastery of the main outline of the doctrine of the Incarnation is of the greatest value to an intelligent grasp of all the truths of the Christian religion. The Incarnation is the key which unlocks all other mysteries.¹ When we proceed to consider the subject of the Sacraments, we shall find the truth of this statement.

The word 'Incarnation' signifies 'the taking flesh,' and contains a brief summary of the great truth taught in the opening verses of the Gospel according to St. John,—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”² By the expression “made flesh,” we are to understand, ‘took human nature.’

¹ “If the mystery explains all things, it is at the price of being inexplicable itself: it is no rest to the human mind that this last problem, like Moses' rod, should swallow all the rest that vex and perplex the spirit of man.”—Bp. Forbes, *Explanation of the XXXIX Articles*, p. 34.

² St. John i. 1, 14.

The Nicene Creed describes this great mystery more fully in the words, "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, . . . Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man."

The Incarnation has been described as "the vastest and most profound of all the ways of God."¹ It speaks of an event which nothing can equal. That the Infinite and Eternal God has become Man—what truth is more amazing? That the Most High God, who knows no beginning, whom the heavens cannot contain, whose power has no limit, should become a helpless babe, born of a human mother, in an unknown village of one of the smallest countries of this little planet on which we live,—what more astonishing thing can the mind of man conceive?

Yet it was so, for it happened just as God had foretold,—“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”² The Child thus conceived and brought forth by the Virgin Mary is “God with us.” This is the Incarnation.

In every true statement of the doctrine of

¹ Bp. Forbes, *Explanation of the XXXIX Articles*, p. 34.

² St. Matt. i. 23.

the Incarnation there are three main points to be noticed, namely—

- I. THE DIVINE NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST.
- II. THE HUMAN NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST.
- III. THE UNION OF THE DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES.¹

Erroneous teaching on any of these main truths of the Incarnation is heresy of the gravest kind; both dishonouring to God, and dangerous to the souls of men. To believe wrongly is not only a dishonour to God's revelation, but it is the first step of wrong conduct. A true faith is the foundation and the shield of a holy life. Christian morals are the outcome of Christian belief. The genuine Christian does certain definite acts, because he accepts certain definite truths. His belief constrains him to perform right actions. For these reasons the Church, as a careful mother, has wisely said, "It is necessary to everlasting salvation, that we should believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ."²

¹ "There are but four things which concur to make complete the whole state of our Lord Jesus Christ—i. His Deity. ii. His Manhood. iii. The Conjunction of both. iv. The Distinction of the one from the other."—Hooker, *Eccles. Pol.* v. 54. 10. In these lectures points iii. and iv. are treated together.

² *Athan. Creed.*

LECTURE I.

THE DIVINE NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST.

“The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God.”
—*Article ii.*

IN the last chapter, we dwelt upon the importance of a right faith in the central truth of the Christian religion, the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We said that in a full and true statement of the doctrine of the Incarnation there were three points demanding our attention. Of these we will now proceed to speak more particularly, devoting this lecture to the consideration of the Divine nature or Godhead of Jesus Christ.

We are taught by the Church from the Scriptures that there is but One God, and that in the One God are Three Persons,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These Three Persons are co-equal in all things. This is the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, and it is a great mystery, passing the range of human thought. It was the second of the

three Persons, our Lord Jesus Christ, who became incarnate.

There are two titles given to our Lord in Holy Scripture which proclaim His Godhead, namely—

I. THE SON OF GOD.

II. THE WORD.

Let us think of these titles of our Lord, and see what they imply.

I. THE SON OF GOD. First, let us observe that our Lord is not called *a* Son of God, but *the* Son of God. There is but one person so related to God the Father, as to be called *the* Son of God. That person is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only-begotten Son of God from all eternity.

In earthly relationships there cannot be a father without offspring: neither can there be a son without a father. The term 'father' implies a son, just as the term 'son' implies a father. It is even so with the eternal Father and the eternal Son. There never was a time when God the Father was without God the Son; there never was a time when God the Son was without God the Father. They are co-eternal together. The words used by the father in the parable may, in their fullest sense, be applied to this eternal relationship—"Son, thou art ever with me."

But more especially, the terms 'father' and 'son' imply likeness, or complete identity of nature. The likeness of a man is in his son.

No human relationship exists in which likeness is closer than in that of father and son. The likeness between brothers is not so close. Again, a son shares his father's nature.

Thus the title, "the Son of God," teaches us, that Jesus Christ shares the likeness and the nature of God the Father, and this in a way in which no other person shares that likeness and nature; for He is the only-begotten Son of the Father.

II. THE WORD. Words are the medium through which thought is revealed. As speech reveals thought, so the Eternal Word reveals God the Father, and that as a Person. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."¹ "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."² The only-begotten Son is the medium of God's revelation or disclosure to man. The Son is called the Word of God, because His Father makes known His will by Him, in the same manner that a man makes known his mind by words.

Again, in a truthful person, words are the exact reproduction of thought. Words are uttered thoughts. Thus the Eternal Word is described as the "brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person."³ The words here translated 'brightness' and 'express image,' mean literally, 'reflection' or

¹ Heb. i. 2.

² St. John i. 18.

³ Heb. i. 3.

‘effulgence,’ and ‘impress.’ The reflection of an object on the retina of the eye answers exactly to the object so reflected; the impress of a seal upon wax answers exactly to the seal. As the Word, Jesus could truly say, “I and My Father are one,” and “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”¹

A house, in all its parts, rests upon the foundations; in like manner the truth of the Incarnation and all its effects upon men for time and eternity, rest upon the foundation that Jesus Christ is God.

To this, let us hold fast in life and in death.

“I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made.”²

¹ St. John x. 30; xiv. 9.

² *Nicene Creed.* The word “of” in the expressions “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,” signifies “out of” or “from.” It implies the eternal generation of the Son from the Father. In reciting the Nicene Creed, a slight stress should be laid upon the word to give the proper meaning. St. Hippolytus says, “When I say that the Son is distinct from the Father, I do not speak of two Gods, but as it were, light from light, and the stream from the fountain, and the ray from the sun.”

LECTURE II.

THE HUMAN NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”

St. John i. 14.

WE have considered the subject of the Divine nature or Godhead of Jesus Christ; we now pass on to consider that of His Human nature or manhood. In language truly sublime, St. Paul tells the story of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son. “Being in the form of God, He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.”¹ That is to say, that though He was God’s equal, yet He did not pride Himself on His divine dignity, but humbled Himself in becoming Man. Thus “God was manifest in the flesh.”² As God from all eternity, He did not cease to be God when He was made Man; He added to the nature of God the nature of Man. The manhood was taken into God.

¹ Phil. ii. 6, 7, *Revised Version.*

² 1 Tim. iii. 16.

The miraculous circumstances attending His birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, are related in the first and second chapters of the Gospel according to St. Luke. Of these we shall have occasion to speak later; at present it will be sufficient to say that Jesus had no human father, being conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin by the direct operation of God the Holy Ghost. The child of Mary, conceived on Lady day, and born into the world on Christmas day, was "Emmanuel, God with us." ¹

If we refer again to the Nicene Creed, we find it stated that "for us men, and for our salvation," the only-begotten Son of God "came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man." It is not said that He was made *a man*, but that He was made *Man*. There is a wide distinction between the two ideas, and we must not to fail to notice it.

When the Son of God became Man, a Divine Person came into the world. He remained the same Person as He had been from everlasting, only He then took to Himself a new nature, and appeared in that new nature.

The Son of God, in the Incarnation, was not made one person or any person in particular,

¹ St. Matt. i. 23.

but was made Mân.¹ When we say that God was made Man, we use the word in the wide sense in which it is used in describing the creation of the human race. In Gen. i. 26, and v. 2, we read, "And God said, Let Us make man . . . and let them have dominion . . ." "Male and female created He them . . . and called their name Adam . . ." In these passages it is clear that the terms 'man' and 'Adam' do not refer to any one person in particular, but to the human race generally. It is not "Let Us make a man, and call his name Adam," but, "Let Us make man, and call their name Adam."

When speaking of our Lord being made Man, we use the word in a similar way. "There is such a thing as that common nature of man which is handed down through an innumerable series of personal inheritors; and He who was personally God, took His place in this series by Incarnation, and thus assumed a common relation to all its possessors."²

If it be asked, Why was not Jesus, as Man, created without human parent or parents, as the first man was? the answer is,—Because, apart from human birth, there could be no

¹ "What Christ associated to Himself, therefore, was no individual man, but that common nature of which Adam was the first example. 'It was not any human person in particular,' says Bp. Beveridge, 'but the human nature which He assumed into His sacred person.'"—Wilberforce, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, iii. 1, 54.

² Ibid. iii. 2, 56.

entrance into human nature. If He had come in any other way, it would not have been in our nature. There was no way except through birth of a human mother, whereby God could have entered completely into our ranks. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"¹—that is to say, "dwelt in us," not making *this* or *that* man His habitation, but "dwelt in us."

This truth has an important bearing on the salvation of the human race, and it should be fully grasped. It was for us men, and for our salvation, that the Incarnation took place. Had God become a man, and not Man, He would have saved but one man—the man whom He became—not the human race.

As our Lord is perfect God, so also He is perfect Man. By 'perfect' we mean complete, lacking nothing. His human nature, like ours, was composed of body, soul, and spirit. He was made "like unto His brethren"² in all points save one. The point in which He differed from us is the very one in which we are imperfect. He came into the world free from original sin. Original sin is the sin in which we were born. It is the sin of our origin or birth, hence it is also called birth-sin.

How was it possible that the Son of God could enter fully into the ranks of the human race, and yet escape this taint or defect? This

¹ St. John i. 14.

² Heb. ii. 17.

is an important question, and demands an answer.

When God became incarnate, He was conceived by the Holy Ghost of a pure virgin. He had but one human parent, a mother. By the act of the sanctifying and life-giving Spirit, He entered fully into the ranks of the human race free from all taint of birth-sin. Had our Lord been born in the ordinary way, of two parents, this would not have been the case.

Although we commonly speak of birth-sin as a taint, yet it is more correct to regard it as a defect or loss. Original sin is the loss of that original righteousness in which God created man. From this loss results man's proneness to evil.¹ Original sin is the lack of something in fallen man, and as such it is an imperfection.

But our Lord's humanity was perfect and complete, knowing no defect or loss. Being free from birth-sin, He was faultless in His origin. Again and again in the Gospels He spoke of Himself as "the Son of Man," *i.e.*, the representative man, possessing a perfection which, in no other instance since the fall, human

¹ "The order of original righteousness consisted in this, that the will of man was obedient to God; and it is the province of the will to direct and rule all the other parts of the soul in conformity to this. Hence, when the will fell away from God, disorder in all the other faculties ensued." —Bp. Forbes, *XXXIX Articles*, p. 145.

nature had attained. The incarnate God was the perfect specimen of humanity, and as such, the complete realization of God's original intention in creating the human race. Looking upon the Son of Mary, the eye of God at length rested with unmixed satisfaction upon the being in whom, at last, He saw one who answered completely to His design. Jesus Christ is perfect Man.

LECTURE III.

THE UNION OF THE DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES.

“Behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”—*Exod.* iii. 2.

“The right faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man . . . Who although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.”—*Athan. Creed.*

IN treating of the doctrine of the Incarnation, we are dealing with a subject full of mystery. In no division of this greatest of subjects is this more felt, than when we come to consider the union of the Divine and Human natures in the Person of Jesus Christ.

We have seen that Jesus Christ is perfect God from all eternity. We have seen that He is perfect Man in time. Now we are to think of Him as uniting the two natures in His divine Person as the God-Man, and that for ever.

We begin by observing that the Godhead did not descend into the child of the Blessed Virgin Mary at some interval after His birth.

From the first moment of the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb, the Godhead and the Manhood were joined together in one Person never to be divided. This is the ground on which the Church has spoken of the Virgin Mary as 'the Mother of God.'¹ The title was given not so much to honour her, as to safeguard the truth concerning the union of the Divine and Human natures of Jesus in her womb. Even the death of Jesus upon the cross did not disturb or sever the union begun before birth. His death was the parting asunder of soul and body; yet even when so parted, neither soul nor body was divided for an instant from the Godhead. The dead body resting in Joseph's tomb was the human body of God: the soul active in paradise was the human soul of God.

Though so closely and so wondrously united in our Lord, each nature remained whole and complete: there was loss to neither. He is

¹ The title 'Mother of God' was solemnly bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin Mary at the General Council of Ephesus, held in the year 431. This Council met to condemn the heresy of Nestorius, who taught that in Christ were two persons, the person of God, and the person of man; the person of God being, as he said, united some time after birth to the person of man. The Catholic faith is, that there is but one person in Christ, that of God; and that this Divine person took the manhood into God in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In speaking of her as 'the Mother of God,' it is not meant that she was the mother of the Divine nature, but of the Human nature of Him who is God, and who took of her that Human nature.

perfect God, and perfect Man. Each nature is distinct; there is no confusion of the one with the other. Wine and water poured into a vessel will mingle, forming a fluid which is neither wine nor water, but a mixture of both—there is confusion of the two; the wine losing itself in the water, the water losing itself in the wine. It was not so with the union of the Godhead and the Manhood in Jesus Christ. Oil and water may be poured into the same vessel without either loss or confusion. In the Incarnation of our Lord, there was the mysterious union between the two perfect natures of God and Man, combined with complete distinction; so that it is true to say that “although our Lord Jesus Christ be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.”¹

Under the figure of a heated sword, we have an illustration, necessarily imperfect, of the profound truth of which we are speaking. Unheated, a sword will cut; heated, it will both cut and burn. In the Incarnation, there was the addition of a new nature to the Godhead, but not of a new Person. The Manhood was taken into God. Our Lord united the two natures of God and Man in the Person of God. Thus we speak of our Lord as the God-Man, for He is both God and Man in one Person. “God was manifest in the flesh.”²

That there should be confusion between the

¹ *Athan. Creed.*

² 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Divine and Human natures was impossible. The Divine nature was that of the infinite Creator; the Human nature was that of the finite creature. Creator and creature must ever remain distinct, they cannot commingle. Had our Lord taken upon Him the nature of a man, and not the nature of Man, He would have possessed two persons,—the person of God, and the person of man. In that case, it would have been impossible to say when He was speaking and acting as God, and when He was speaking and acting as man. The Catholic doctrine, if it passes our understanding, certainly commends itself to our reason.

It is this marvellous union of the two natures in the one Person which alone explains the language of the New Testament, which states that the Blessed Virgin Mary was the mother of the Lord; that the Lord of glory was crucified; that the Church was purchased with the blood of God; that the Word of life was handled; that the Son of Man was in heaven whilst upon earth.¹

For, as Hooker has said, "No person was born of the Virgin but the Son of God, no person but the Son of God baptized, the Son of God condemned, the Son of God and no other person crucified."² Whatsoever He did

¹ St. Luke i. 43; 1 Cor. ii. 8; Acts xx. 28; 1 St. John i. 1; St. John iii. 13.

² *Eccles. Polity*, v. 52, 3.

in our behalf was done by the same person, and that person was God.

All we have said in this lecture has a most important bearing upon the redeeming work of our Saviour Jesus Christ. It is through the marvellous union of which we have been speaking, that our Lord's work obtains its wondrous power. It is because of this union of the Godhead and the Manhood in one Person, that the acts of the Manhood of Jesus are ever the acts of His Godhead; that the words which He spake with human lips are the words of God; that the works which He wrought as Man, such as His death and resurrection, are the works of God, and therefore effectual to the salvation of the world. If we would have an intelligent belief in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, it is needful that we should grasp the great truths of which we have been speaking.

LECTURE IV.

THE HUMAN AGENT IN THE INCARNATION.

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.”—*Gal.* iv. 4.

“Ave Maria ! thou whose name
All but adoring love may claim.”

J. Keble.

HITHERTO, our study of the doctrine of the Incarnation has led us into deep waters, for we have been dwelling upon the greatest mysteries of the Catholic faith. Now, we pass on to an easier task, for we are to think in this lecture of her through whom the Incarnation was accomplished—the mother of our Lord.

The Incarnation can never become a reality to the mind, until the Blessed Virgin's share in the marvellous transaction is fully acknowledged. Surely, there is no one whose duty it is to teach others, who has not been ashamed and pained at the ignorance which prevails upon the chief truth of the Christian religion,—the Incarnation. The author of these pages is convinced that this deplorable ignorance

arises largely from the fact, that the person and office of the mother of the Lord has been kept in the background. How rarely do we hear in sermons of the blessed mother and the virgin birth, beyond a passing allusion. We see representations of the Crucifixion in almost every church, speaking to the eye, as no words can, of the Redemption. Why should we not be also accustomed to see in our churches pictures or representations of the human mother holding the divine Child in her arms, proclaiming the central truth of our religion, that God is made Man? Pictures are the books of the unlearned.¹

The distressing excesses of the Roman branch of the Church, in regard to the Blessed Virgin, have also a great deal to answer for in all this ignorance, and, we may add, prejudice, which we are lamenting. From these excesses we, of the English Church, are happily delivered. Our danger lies in another direction; it lies in the failure to give her the place of honour which God has given her, and the gratitude which is clearly her due. In so disregarding her and her office, we have come to forget the Incarnate Lord, who took flesh in

¹ Worshippers in St. Paul's cathedral will notice that this defect is there supplied in the statue of the virgin mother holding the divine Child, which adorns the reredos behind the high altar. For this witness to the truth of the Incarnation in 'the central sacred spot of the capital of the civilized world,' we cannot be too thankful.

her womb, and to lose faith in His real entrance into the ranks of human nature. To give our Lord's human mother her proper place, is a necessity to a full grasp of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

The promise of the coming of God in the flesh dates back to a time when our first parents, Adam and Eve, alone existed of the human race. It was given by God upon the entrance of sin into the world. The sentence passed upon our race was accompanied by the promise, that, in due time, the Deliverer should come to restore fallen man to God. The serpent's head should be bruised by the seed of the woman.¹ It was a promise kept alive in the heart of every Jewish woman, in her desire to be the one chosen to give birth to the Deliverer.

The centuries rolled on, and still the great promise of the coming of the Deliverer remained unfulfilled. At length "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman."² The woman, the chosen vessel of the Incarnation, was a village maiden named Mary. She is said to have been the child of Jewish parents, named Joachim and Anna. Of her early life we know nothing. That she was sanctified from her mother's womb, and lived a life of spotless innocence, there can be no doubt; otherwise, she could not have been fitted for her high and

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

² Gal. iv. 4.

mysterious office, as the mother of the Incarnate God.

It was to this pure maiden of Nazareth, thus chosen and prepared by God, that the angel Gabriel came, bearing the offer from God of an honour so high and amazing, that, compared with it, every earthly honour is as nothing. The angel's message was nothing less than that Almighty God would, with her consent, take human form in her womb. "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." . . . "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest."¹

Then arose in Mary's mind the wondering question, how could she, a virgin, bear a child? Had ever maiden become mother without the agency of human father? "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"²

It was then that Gabriel announced to Mary that the agency of a human father would be superseded, and that, through the power of God, a virgin-birth would be accomplished. He assured her that, in conceiving and bringing forth her Child, her chastity would remain,

¹ St. Luke i. 28, etc.

² Ibid i. 34.

that she would still be a virgin.¹ He taught her that she should fulfil the mother's part, God the Holy Ghost quickening the powers of nature. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."² But not even yet was the Incarnation accomplished; there wanted the consent of Mary to be the agent in its fulfilment.

Let us pause to consider what this announcement involved to Mary. She must have seen, by a pure womanly instinct, that there lay before her a time of keenest trial, of suspicion, and of agonizing doubt. If she accepted her

¹ It is the opinion of the Church that the mother of Jesus was a virgin both before and after the birth of Jesus. The words, "And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son" (St. Matt. i. 25), do not imply that she ceased to be a virgin after the birth of Jesus, or that there were other children born later. They are intended to make it quite plain that Joseph was not the father of Mary's Child. They guard Mary's virginity up to the time of the birth of her first and only Son. The term "firstborn" does not imply a second-born. There were, amongst the Jews, certain rites performed in reference to the first son born into a family; and thus he was called "the first-born," whether there were other children or not (see Exodus xiii. 2; St. Luke ii. 22, 23). The brethren of the Lord, alluded to in the Gospels, were not the children of the virgin mother; they are generally supposed to have been either the children of Joseph by a former marriage, or to have been the cousins of our Lord.

² St. Luke i. 35.

amazing destiny, would not the finger of reproach be pointed at her as the holy Child grew in her womb? How could she explain her condition even to those dearest to her? How terrible must the facing of all this have been to one whose soul was as pure as the driven snow? What would Joseph, to whom she was about to be married, think of her? What he *did* think, we know; for we are told that at first "he was minded to put her away privily,"¹ to hide her from the shame which he began to think she had brought upon herself. Only a voice from heaven reassured him, and relieved him from the painful suspicion. Beyond all this, there was the thought of the strangely mysterious association with the deep purposes of Almighty God, and all it would cost her to maintain such dignity, which must have tempted the Blessed Virgin to hesitate in accepting the divine call.

It was a tremendous crisis in the history of the world. Would the purpose of the Eternal Son to be incarnate for us men and for our salvation be accepted, or would His merciful design, for a season at least, be delayed? The immediate decision lay with Mary as a moral agent. We may well thank God that she made the right decision. In the face of all that awaited her, the Blessed Virgin accepted with a splendid self-surrender the wondrous call of God, and uttered the eventful

¹ St. Matt. i. 19.

words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word."¹ In that central moment the Son of God came down into her womb, and began to take human form.

Well may the Holy Church throughout the world account Mary the chiefest of the saints, and acknowledge her to be "Blessed among women," and ever call her, with grateful and loving voice, "The Blessed Virgin Mary."

¹ St. Luke i. 38.

"The necessity of believing our Saviour thus to be born of the Virgin Mary, will appear both in respect of her who was the mother, and of Him who was the Son. In respect of her, it was therefore necessary, that we might perpetually preserve an esteem of her person proportionable to so high a dignity. It was her own prediction, 'From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;' but the obligation is ours to call her, to esteem her so. If Elizabeth cried out with so 'loud a voice, Blessed art thou among women,' when Christ was but newly conceived in her womb; what expressions of honour and admiration can we think sufficient, now that Christ is in heaven, and that mother with Him? Far be it from any Christian to derogate from that special privilege granted her, which is incommunicable to any other. We cannot bear too reverend a regard unto the mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the Lord Himself. Let us keep the language of the primitive Church: 'Let her be honoured and esteemed, let Him be worshipped and adored.'"—Bp. Pearson's *Exposition of the Creed*, Art. iii. § 3. 3.

LECTURE V.

THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION (I.)

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”—I *St. John* iii. 8.

THE question whether the Son of God would have been incarnate if man had not fallen, was freely discussed in the middle ages. Some great thinkers held, that the Incarnation would have taken place even if Adam had not sinned. Others held, that the Incarnation was but the remedy for the fall.

To assert that there would have been no Incarnation if there had been no sin, would be extremely rash. There are hints to be found in the pages of the New Testament, which forbid us making such an assertion.¹ The expression of the Nicene Creed, “Who for us men, and for our salvation, etc.,” lends itself to the idea, that, if no “salvation” had been needed, our Lord would have been incarnate “for us men.” There are also weighty reasons which

¹ See Rom. viii. 29; Eph. i. 10, 22; Col. i. 15 ff., ii. 10; Heb. ii. 10.

lead to the conclusion, that God's purpose to become incarnate was prior to, and independent of, the fall. The general silence of the Scriptures concerning an Incarnation apart from the fall, may be set down to the fact, that, with the exception of the first two chapters of Genesis, they deal with man in his fallen state, and his restoration from that fallen state. Thus, in Holy Scripture the Incarnation is generally regarded as the remedy for the fall. The reader will remember that in the last lecture we saw, that the earliest promise of the Incarnation followed the first sin of man.

In accordance with this, we will consider the purpose of the Incarnation to be the restoration of fallen man to fellowship with God; or, in other words, the making of atonement.

Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God. "Let Us make man in our image, after our likeness."¹ A distinction between this image and likeness has been maintained by some great teachers. It seems unlikely that God would have used two words to express but one thing. We may regard the image, as marked upon the structure of the soul.² This structure is revealed in the exercise of the memory, the understanding, and the will. The soul is one in structure, yet threefold in action. Nothing can destroy

¹ Gen. i. 26.

² On the use of the word 'soul' as applied to the whole of man's immaterial being, see later in this work.

this image ; it remained after the fall, though seriously disordered. The likeness depends upon grace. A soul in a state of grace is in the likeness of God. The thought of the difference between the outlines which form a face and the expression which lights up the face, is helpful in giving some idea of the distinction between the image and the likeness of God in the soul.

When God created man, He pronounced him to be "very good."¹ Man was very good, because he was perfect. His perfection consisted in the happy agreement of body, soul, and spirit, and was due to the subjection of his whole being to grace. To the gifts of nature in man, was added a gift above and beyond nature, for his guidance and sanctification. This supernatural gift or grace caused man to possess the likeness of God.

Thus, in Adam, so long as he suffered himself to be guided by the grace of God, there was no conflict between duty and inclination. He knew nothing of the struggle between 'I ought' and 'I wish.' He loved right, and he was ignorant of wrong. Moreover, by following the divine guidance, his union with God was preserved.

By the fall, man lost the likeness of God ; if not completely, yet to a most serious extent. The fall brought imperfection to the human race. Man henceforth lacked that perfection

¹ Gen. i. 31.

in which God created him. This imperfection is named birth-sin or original sin. It is the sin of our birth or origin. Original sin, regarded as the loss of that original righteousness in which mankind was created, is rather of the nature of a defect than of a positive taint. Birth-sin, then, is of the nature of an imperfection. Adam handed down this imperfection to all his posterity. The root of the tree of humanity being diseased, the leaves and the fruit also suffered. Of Seth it is recorded, that "Adam begat a son in his own likeness,"¹ not in God's likeness. The imperfect parent begat an imperfect offspring. In time, the imperfect offspring became a parent, with a like result. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one."²

Original sin is the extension of the effects of the fall to all the descendants of Adam. It is the handing down to all posterity of an incomplete and disordered nature. That which loss of sight, or defective vision, is to the eye, birth-sin is to the soul. The soul is blind from its birth. Every child born after the fall comes into the world lacking the divine light of God's grace. As a ship launched on an angry sea, with defective compass and broken helm, such is a picture of the soul on its entry into the world. A general confusion of man's inner nature resulted from the lack of the

¹ Gen. v. 3.

² Job xiv. 4.

guiding light.¹ Thus birth-sin was quickly followed by actual sin.

From the loss of the divine light in the soul, separation between God and man at once resulted. Man fell out with God,—fell out of harmony with His will, fell out of correspondence with His grace. Thus we speak of the sin of the first man as ‘the fall.’ “Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.”² The result of the second recorded sin is similar: Cain said, “From Thy face shall I be hid.”³ The story of Bethlehem and Calvary was not then known, and the sinner’s first impulse was to flee from God. Separation between God and man resulted from the loss of the likeness of God.

The object of the Incarnation was to remedy this disorder, by restoring to man the likeness of God which he had forfeited by sin, and by this means to reunite man to fellowship with God. Of this we will speak in the next lecture.

¹ “We are led to the conclusion, that original sin arises from the absence of that guiding light, the lack of which was followed by general confusion in man’s inner nature. By this means was a door opened to that hostile power of evil, which had no place in man’s original being.”—Wilberforce, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, iii. 2. 73.

² Gen. iii. 8.

³ Gen. iv. 14.

LECTURE VI.

THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION (II.)

“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—*I Cor. xv. 22.*

IN the previous lecture we saw that, granting the fall, the purpose of the Incarnation was to restore the likeness of God to fallen man, and thereby to reunite him to God.

In order that this might be accomplished, God was made Man. He took flesh of a woman—of one who was heir to Adam's defects; but those defects were, from the first moment of His conception, corrected by the presence of the likeness of God in its fulness. The Son of God took all the elements of our common humanity, without their disorder. To say that he was born without sin, is but another way of saying that He was born in the likeness of God. If we remember that birth-sin is the loss of this likeness, we have no difficulty in seeing wherein the perfection or completeness of our Lord's human nature consisted. His human nature was the home of

the Deity. Thus He is "the express image of God's person."¹

No defect was passed on to Him, for He, alone of all men, was conceived by the Holy Ghost of a pure virgin. The dispensing with the agency of a human father secured this; had the Child of Mary been also the Child of Joseph, it could not have been. The spell was at last broken by the Holy Ghost acting afresh through a virgin-birth; and the second Adam entered into the ranks of human nature, perfect Man.

When Herschel, the astronomer, was constructing one of his great telescopes, he came to the making of a mirror of metal called the speculum. Two hundred of these were made, before he procured one perfect for his purpose. Mirror after mirror was produced only to be thrown aside, because faulty. At last, a perfect speculum was obtained. It was thus with the human race and its imperfection. At last, one appeared who answered completely to God's design, and whom, in His perfection, God could regard with entire satisfaction. Only in our Incarnate Lord was the perfect Man found.

The perfect Manhood of Jesus, in whom "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,"² fitted Him to be the new head of the redeemed race, the second Adam,—the second Man, who possessed in all its fulness the likeness of God.

¹ Heb. i. 3.

² Col. ii. 9.

Thus, as St. Irenæus says, Christ became head of man's race, that in Him we might recover the likeness of God which in Adam was lost.¹

The object of the Incarnation was to reunite man to God, or the making of Atonement. Atonement signifies at-one-ment. By sin, man had separated himself from God. Before reunion could take place, the mediator must appear. A mediator is a 'go-between.' This mediator must be God and Man, possessing both the divine and the human natures in one person. He must be the God-Man. God and Man meet in the person of the incarnate Lord. As the ladder, which Jacob saw in his dream, joined earth to heaven, so the Incarnation joined man to God. Our Lord applied this figure to Himself when He said, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."²

The best mediator in a dispute is one who knows both sides of the matter in question, and is therefore in a position to be fair all round. Before the Incarnation, man might have used the words of Job, "God is not a man, as I am . . . neither is there any days-man (*i.e.*, arbiter) betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both."³ We need a mediator who shall have a human face, so that we may

¹ Bk. iii. ch. 18. § 1.

³ Job ix. 32, 33.

² St. John i. 51.

speak to him unabashed; but also a divine face, so that he may speak to God for us. Such, in truth, is our Lord Jesus Christ. With the right hand of His Godhead, He laid hold on God; with the left hand of His Manhood, He laid hold on man. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."¹ Almighty power and perfect sympathy were united in the God-Man, fitting Him to be our mediator and advocate with the Father.

There is a further point which we must here notice. It is this:—Sin, original and actual, not only caused the loss of God's likeness, and man's separation from God, but it also incurred a debt to God which fallen man was powerless to pay. The righteous justice of God rose up in awful grandeur against sin. A sacrifice for sin must of necessity be offered. But as all men were guilty sinners, no man was able to ransom his own soul, let alone the souls of his brethren. "No man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him: for it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever."²

In this terrible strait the Son of God, with divine generosity, stepped in. "And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me."³ By an act of splendid mercy, the Eternal Son

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19.² Psalm xlix. 7, 8.³ Isaiah lxiii. 5.

became incarnate, that He might offer Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of a lost world.

In the person of the Word made flesh, the needful conditions were fulfilled. As God, He was able to satisfy, but not to suffer: as Man, He was able to suffer, but not to satisfy: as the God-Man, He was able both to suffer for our sins, and to satisfy the divine justice. As sinless Man, our Lord Jesus Christ had no sins of His own for which to atone: as Almighty God, He was able to pay the ransom. And since as God He could not die, He took Man's nature upon Him, that as the God-Man He might offer a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

LECTURE VII.

THE WITNESS OF THE INCARNATION TO THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.”—*St. John* iii. 16.

TO have right thoughts of God, is a matter of the first importance to man. Ignorance of the character of God is one of the most fruitful sources of indifference and of sin. Let us, in this lecture, answer the question, What is the character of the God who made us, who claims our service, and who will one day be our Judge? The Incarnation, and all that resulted from it, gives a full and final answer to this great question.

‘Shew me a man’s greatest work, tell me the motives which urged him forward in his task, and I will tell you the character of the man.’ So we speak amongst ourselves, and so it is concerning God.

The Incarnation is the disclosure of God. The Creation teaches much concerning God,

but the Incarnation teaches more. The Incarnation is a more full and personal revelation of God than the Creation, for it is His greatest work,—His masterpiece. It is impossible to conceive of God doing anything more amazing than in redeeming us by becoming Man. The Eternal God lies a helpless babe in the arms of a human mother ! Thought refuses to go beyond that. Viewing the Incarnation as the greatest of all God's revelations to man, what do we learn from it ?

1. The Incarnation teaches us of the love of God ; it is the mirror in which we see that love reflected. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son."¹ We may measure the greatness of the love of God, by the greatness of His gift. We only give our most precious gifts to those we love. The instinct to give things of value ever accompanies true love. Wherever there is love, there is sacrifice. The more passionate the love, the more reckless is the generosity. And what could be more precious to God, than His only and well-beloved Son ? This precious gift He bestowed upon man in the Incarnation ; and so the Incarnation reveals the generosity of God's measureless love to man. All this is heightened, when we consider that there was no necessity laid upon God to save us. He might have left us to work out our own ruin,

¹ St. John iii. 16.

as was the case with the fallen angels. In His almightiness, He might have chosen an easier and less painful method of saving us. The gift of the only-begotten Son in the Incarnation, is the measure of the love of God to mankind.

Whatever our lot in life, however hard or painful, we can always assure ourselves of the love of God. We can say, In spite of everything, I know that God loves me, or He would not have been incarnate. If only we believe in the Incarnation, nothing, however untoward, can shake our faith in the love of God.

2. The Incarnation tells us of the justice of God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"¹ A charge of injustice is often brought against God, and that mainly in regard to the permission of evil and its results. If God is holy, why does He allow evil to exist? If God is just, why does He not put a stop to it? Is it fair in God to allow us to be tempted?

As some help to solving these questions, we must remember that the existence of evil is the price which we pay for our moral freedom. The possession of freewill implies the possible choice of evil as well as of good. There can be no trial of the will, without the possibility of evil. Goodness could have no value, unless

¹ Gen. xviii. 25.

freely chosen in the face of evil. The existence of evil is a great mystery; but we know enough of God's love and power to trust Him concerning it.

The Incarnation has one most important bearing upon this subject. One of its chief objects was, that God Himself might bring to man the grace to resist evil,—that He might bring to man the divine strength to make the right choice. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."¹ We never fall of necessity. We can never truly say, I could not help doing wrong. We fall only, when we refuse the grace which God freely gives through the sacred Manhood of Jesus Christ. "My grace is sufficient for thee,"² and this grace is ours through the Incarnation, and its extension in the sacraments of the Church, of which we shall speak later.

3. The Incarnation teaches us of the compassion of God. Compassion is sympathy and mercy blended. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren."³ Sympathy is fellow-feeling. That God might prove His sympathy with us, He entered into fellowship with us, and that by becoming Man. By the Incarnation, God is our Brother. His sympathy drew Him, as by a mighty magnet, from heaven to earth. The Holy Ghost taught Zacharias to say, "Through the

¹ Rom. v. 20.

² 2 Cor. xii. 9.

³ Heb. ii. 17.

tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high hath visited us.”¹ God’s “tender mercy,” or “heart of mercy” as the expression means, urged Him to become Man. The Incarnation teaches that God so greatly pitied us, and felt such an heart-ache for us, that He became Man in order to help us, and to restore us to fellowship with Himself.

The Incarnation, then, when rightly considered, affords undoubted evidence of the love, of the justice, and of the compassion of God.

The prophet Isaiah, in speaking of our Incarnate Lord, describes Him as the “Wonderful.”² Wonderful, indeed, He is, for He came to astonish men with the revelation of the beauty of God’s character.

¹ St. Luke i. 78.

² Isaiah ix. 6.

PART II.

The Sacraments.

“SACRAMENTS ARE THE APPLICATION OF THE INCARNATION; THE MEANS OF BRINGING HOME TO EACH INDIVIDUAL THAT BENEFIT WHICH WAS BESTOWED BY CHRIST UPON OUR COLLECTIVE RACE.”

LECTURE I.

THE SACRAMENTS, THE EXTENSION OF THE INCARNATE LIFE.

“The fathers, by an elegant expression, called the blessed sacrament the Extension of the Incarnation.”—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor*, *The Worthy Communicant*, i. 2.

THE Incarnation is not merely something which we read of in the New Testament, and remember as a proof of the condescension of God ; it is rather a living fact, which is now acting upon us in the spiritual world. We may describe a living fact as a past event which lives into the present, and which now closely touches and seriously affects us. There is in the heavens a cluster of stars named the Pleiades. Some centuries ago there were seven stars visible in this cluster, now there are but six. The disappearance of one of the group cannot be described as a living fact ; we are in no way affected by the loss. The appearance of sun and moon on the fourth creative day is a living fact ; the presence of these light-bearers affects us daily. The

Incarnation of our Lord is not merely an event which belongs to past history; it is a living reality, having a direct bearing and influence upon men in the present. The spiritual force resulting from the Incarnation is as strong in this twentieth century, as it was in the first century. It is the privilege of the Catholic Christian to live in the perpetual sunlight of the Incarnation, and to breathe its atmosphere.

The earthly life of the incarnate Lord is not merely one helpful example out of many good lives; it is the living example of what every life should be, to be kept ever before our eyes. The death of Christ was not merely that of a martyr for the truth; it is the abiding sacrifice for the sin of the world. The intercession of Christ at the right hand of the Father is not, as the pleading of Queen Philippa for the men of Calais, a thing of the past; it is an abiding intercession for all who are now living. The Incarnation, and all that resulted from it, is an eternal verity; at this moment the source of that living power whereby alone we can be saved. The Incarnation is the ladder which unites heaven and earth; it was set up when God took flesh of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and it is still standing in the Christian Church.

Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. We are saved by coming into living touch with the sacred humanity of the incarnate Son of God.

He has ordained that we should do this by means of the sacraments of the Holy Catholic Church, which is His mystical body. In the sacraments, we come into vital contact and living union with our incarnate Lord. The sacraments are therefore described as the extension of the incarnate Life of Christ our Lord—they are a lengthening out of that Life, so as to touch and affect men now. The sacraments are the stretching out of the Incarnation, so that its blessings and forces reach men in the living present. They are, so to speak, the continuation of the work of the Incarnation through time and space. When we seek the sacraments, it is as though we went to Bethlehem and Calvary, and saw with our eyes and handled with our hands the Word-made-flesh. In Baptism we share the birth of Bethlehem; in Holy Communion we are crucified with Christ; in Absolution, released from sin, we rise with Him; in Confirmation we partake of the Gift of Pentecost.

If a rich man makes a bequest to an infirmary, for the purpose of a free distribution of medicines; it is not enough for a sick man to have faith in the goodness of the donor, and the efficacy of the medicines. He must have such a faith as will lead him to seek the medicines in the appointed manner, and at the appointed times. If he fails to do this, the medicines will not heal him. Thus, true faith

leads men to seek Christ in the manner which He has appointed. True belief conducts to the sacraments, in which the spiritual forces of the Incarnation permanently dwell. To "preach Jesus," and a "belief in Jesus," mean, in two passages of the New Testament at least, the preaching of the doctrine of the sacraments, and the bringing men to Jesus by their means.¹

It is not to be understood that the sacraments are the only means of grace; prayer is a means of grace, so also is meditation upon Holy Scripture. But the sacraments differ from all other means of grace, for they lead to union with Christ, whilst other things result from that union. It is the work of the Church to bring souls into living union with a living Person, Jesus Christ; and she does this through the sacraments, which He ordained for that purpose.

We are right in regarding the sacraments as the appointed means of grace, and as the channels of spiritual grace. All grace comes from the sacred human nature of Jesus Christ. The incarnate Word is "full of grace."² This grace is ours through the sacraments which Christ has appointed.

It is sometimes wrongly said, that, in speaking of the sacraments, we are putting something between the soul and Christ. But how can the sacraments, which Christ has appointed to

¹ See Acts viii. 35-39; xvi. 30-34. ² St. John i. 14.

bring us into union with Himself, stand between us and Him?

The blessings of the sacramental system are very great. When tempted to doubt, the soul living within its sphere can rest upon a solid hope; since sacramental grace does not depend upon man's confidence, but upon Christ's institution and unfailing promise. Sacraments are facts, not symbols; they are as a purse full of gold, not as a cheque; they effect what they signify, for they are "effectual signs of grace,"¹ Sacraments are the outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace given unto us; they are the pledges which assure us that, together with the outward sign, the grace is given by God to the soul.² Neither do they minister to pride, since they are signs of God's almighty power acting upon man from without, and therefore not depending upon his own feelings. The soul that approaches the sacraments with faith and repentance is undoubtedly blessed.

¹ Art. xxv.

² What meanest thou by this word *Sacrament*?

I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof."—*Church Catechism*.

The explanation of this somewhat difficult answer is as follows:—

i. In the sacraments, God gives His grace through the outward and visible sign.

ii. The outward and visible sign is the means, ordained by Christ, whereby we receive the grace of God.

iii. The outward and visible sign is the pledge to assure us that the grace of God is given to us in the sacraments.

LECTURE II

THE NECESSITY OF THE SACRAMENTS.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches ; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing.”—*St. John* xv. 5.

WE will now proceed further to consider the sacraments as the extension of the incarnate life of Christ. We have seen that all grace resides in the person of Jesus Christ. We have seen that, to obtain this grace, we must come into vital union, or living touch, with the sacred Human nature of Jesus Christ. We have seen that the sacraments are the divinely appointed means whereby this living union is attained.

The term ‘sacrament’ has been used in a wider sense than that which we usually attach to it. St. Augustine defines a sacrament as a sacred sign.¹ Any sacred thing of which it

¹ “St. Augustine calleth sacraments holy signs. . . . By these words it appeareth that he alloweth the common description of a sacrament, which is that it is a visible sign of an invisible grace.”—Homily, *Of Common Prayer and Sacraments*.

could be said, This possesses an inward power, or a hidden meaning, was termed a sacrament. For example, the Holy Scriptures might in this way be called a sacrament, associating as they do the words and their meaning in one whole.

But, by degrees, the term 'sacrament' became restricted to certain ordinances. Some of these owe their existence to our Lord's direct institution, as recorded in the Gospels; others to the Apostles, acting, we may believe, under unrecorded commands of Christ.¹ Jesus had promised that "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."²

These sacraments may be divided into two groups, named the Greater Sacraments and the Lesser Sacraments.

The two Greater Sacraments are:—

1. Holy Baptism.
2. The Holy Eucharist.

The five Lesser Sacraments are:

1. Confirmation.
2. Absolution.
3. Holy Order.
4. Holy Matrimony.
5. Unction of the Sick.

¹ See Acts i. 3.

² St. John xiv. 26.

It is not our purpose to discuss the whole of the ordinances named in the foregoing list, but to devote particular attention to the first two,—the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

The sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist claim special attention, for our Blessed Lord has given them a peculiar prominence. They are sometimes called ‘Sacraments of the Gospel,’ because they have their visible sign or ceremony ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospels. On His authority, the Church has ever held them to be of necessity to salvation, where they can possibly be had. On the plain testimony of our Lord, no one who wilfully neglects either, can hope for salvation.

Of Holy Baptism, He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”¹

Of the Holy Eucharist, He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.”²

The Church simply echoes the words of her Lord, when, in the Catechism, she declares that the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are “generally necessary to salvation.”³

¹ St. John iii. 5.

² St. John vi. 53.

³ At the time when the Catechism was written, the word ‘generally,’ meant ‘for all men in general without excep-

It is quite sufficient to take our Lord's word, and the teaching of His Church, as the reason why no one is safe who is not baptized, and who does not receive the Holy Communion of His body and blood. But beyond this, there is a reason which we are permitted to see, why He has thus ordained. It is this:—The sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion pertain to the life of the soul. There is no life in the soul apart from union with Jesus Christ. "Without me ye can do nothing."¹ Baptism places the soul in union with Christ: Holy Communion keeps it in union with Him.

In the natural life of the body there are two conditions of existence, viz., birth and sustenance. The life must be given in birth: the life given in birth must be sustained. It is even so with the spiritual life of the soul. There must be the gift of life, and the preservation of the life so given. In Baptism, the new life of the soul is commenced once for all: in Holy Communion, the life of the soul is continually sustained.

From this it is clear that, whilst a person must receive the Holy Communion often, he can only be baptized once. To be baptized more than once is as useless as it is irreverent.

tion.' It is so used in other places in the Prayer Book. See also 2 Sam. xvii. 11; Jeremiah xlviii. 38, for a similar use of the word.

¹ St. John xv. 5.

To receive the Body and Blood of the Lord but once or twice in a life-time, is equally against reason. Our Lord implies frequent reception by His use of the word "oft" or "often," in the words of institution.¹

The Church of England orders, that "there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."² In cases of necessity, lest any baptized person should die without the Communion of the body and blood of Christ, the desire for Confirmation is accepted, and the Communion administered. Together with the rest of Western Christendom, the Church of England holds that children, who are baptized and die before receiving Confirmation and Communion, are saved; reserving these Sacraments until they have arrived at years of discretion.

Let every one then who values his salvation be certain that he is baptized, and let him be careful to receive the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ according to a well-considered rule. By this means, if he walk accordingly, his soul will be 'safe' in life, and 'saved' in death; and living or dying he will be found in Christ.

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26.

² *The Order of Confirmation.*

LECTURE III.

HOLY BAPTISM.

THE REMEDY FOR BIRTH SIN. (I.)

“Jesus said . . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”—*St. John* iii. 3.

THE sacrament of Holy Baptism, foreshadowed by our Lord's baptism in the river Jordan, was instituted by Him, on the eve of His ascension, as an abiding sacrament of the Church. He gave the command to the apostles, as the first ministers of His Church, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”¹

In His conversation with Nicodemus, recorded in the third chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, Jesus asserted the necessity of Baptism, and described its effect upon the soul. That our Lord was speaking of Holy Baptism in this passage is evident. Richard Hooker says, “Of all the ancient”

¹ St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

(meaning the old writers), "there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise either expound or allege the place (St. John iii.) than as implying external baptism."¹ The coupling of the words "water" and "the Spirit," makes it plain that our Lord is speaking of Baptism, and not of conversion. There may be conversion without the use of water, even without the shedding of tears.

To be 'born again,' or to be regenerate, is the same as to be baptized. The Latin word for 'being born' is 'natus;' the word for 'being born again' is 'renatus.'² In the ninth of the thirty-nine articles, the word 'renatus' is translated 'regenerated,' and also 'baptized.' This is clear proof that the Church of England regards Baptism as the new birth, or regeneration, of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus.

The effect of Baptism is the regeneration, or new birth, of the soul. St. Paul speaks of Baptism as the "washing (or bath) of regeneration."³ Immediately after the baptism of a child, the Church declares, "Seeing now that this child is regenerate. . . ."

¹ *Eccles. Polity*, v. 59, 3.

² The writer remembers seeing in the old parish church of Halifax, a tablet in memory of archbishop Tillotson, which was discovered whilst the church was undergoing restoration. Upon this tablet it was recorded in Latin, that the archbishop was born (natus) on a certain date, and was baptized (renatus) a few days later.

³ Titus iii. 5.

From our Lord's declaration of the necessity of a new or second birth,¹ we learn that the first birth of our parents is faulty and needs correction. When a work requires to be done over again, we know that something has been wrongly done which needs to be amended.

What is this fault in the soul which renders a new birth necessary? What need is there for the soul to be born again?

The reply to this question is—The truthful confession of every one is, "Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me."² It is because of original sin, that the soul must be born again. We are born into the world with something wanting, with a serious defect. This defect, as we have seen in a previous lecture, is the loss of the likeness of God. Every child comes into the world lacking in its fulness, if not altogether, the likeness of God. The divine light to guide and the divine grace to help are wanting. The first man lost both these gifts, and passed on the defect to all his posterity. The course of time cannot remedy the loss. It would be possible to collect every lamp and candle in a house, and to find the light gone out of each and all. Of the unregenerate race it is true to say, "they are all gone out of the way."³

How then is this lost likeness of God to be restored to man? We reply, By one coming

¹ St. John iii. 3, 5.

² Psalm li. 5.

³ Psalm xiv. 4.

to earth who shall possess the likeness of God in its fulness, and by this one becoming the second Adam, the new head of the human race. If all the lamps in a house are gone out, some one must strike or bring a light before the darkened lamps can be re-lit. If one lamp only be re-lit, the others may take light from that one.

The Incarnation brought to our earth the perfect Man,—perfect and complete, in that He possessed God's likeness in its fulness. The Son of Mary brought back the lost likeness, with a view to handing it on to all who should be born again into union with Him. It is not enough that our Lord should possess the likeness, each soul must share it too; we need to obtain a part in it, and to make it our own, one by one. To do this we must be "born again," in Baptism "of water and of the Spirit," and so be brought into vital union with the perfect Man. We are "baptized into Christ,"¹ that is, into living, personal union with Him. The candle must touch the lighted match, or it will not take light and shine. Baptism brings the soul into living touch with Jesus Christ, and was formerly called illumination. It is so described in Heb. vi. 4, and x. 32, where the baptized are addressed as "those who were once enlightened," and are bidden to "call to remembrance the former days, in which, after

¹ Gal. iii. 27.

they were illuminated, they endured a great fight of afflictions."

Jesus Christ declared Himself to be "the Light of the world."¹ By being brought into union with Him in Holy Baptism, the flame of the soul is rekindled at the fount of light. Of the baptized it may be said, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord,"² and "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."³

¹ St. John viii. 12. ² Eph. v. 8. ³ St. Matt. v. 16.

LECTURE IV.

HOLY BAPTISM.

THE REMEDY FOR BIRTH SIN. (II.)

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.”

Prov. xx. 27.

IN the last lecture, we saw that, since the fall of the first Adam, the likeness of God had been lost to the human race. Our Lord came to the earth to bring back, and to hand on to His people, the lost likeness. For this purpose, He instituted the sacrament of Baptism. Just as the first birth brought us into union with the first Adam and his defects, so our Baptism, or new birth, brings us into union with the second Adam and His perfection. By union with the sacred human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may regain what is wanting by the imperfection inherited from the first Adam. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,”¹ for he has received a new birth, giving him a new nature. In Baptism, the soul is brought into

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

vital union with the human nature of Jesus, and the germ or beginning of God's likeness is planted in the soul.

Observe, that Baptism does not suddenly transform us into perfect men. The soul's regeneration, like the body's growth, is of course a protracted process, which the whole life is not too long to complete. But what gives Baptism its special character is, that in that holy rite the process is begun. Baptism puts the soul upon the path which leads to life. It introduces the soul into such a state or condition, as may in the end lead to perfection. It is the calling of the soul into a state of salvation,—a state in which salvation becomes possible. Baptism is as the casting of a piece of leaven into the dough: the leaven begins to work slowly and steadily, till the whole mass is leavened. It is as the running of a clear stream of living water through a stagnant pool: the foul water is by degrees driven out, and the pure water takes its place. It is as the kindling of a spark in the soul,—a spark which must be carefully tended, and fanned into a bright and steady flame. The likeness of God, at first faint and dim, becomes stronger and more complete, until fully developed in the ripened saint. Such an one will awaken at the resurrection after God's likeness, and will be satisfied with it.¹

Thus, baptismal grace has a mighty task to

¹ See Psalm xvii. 16.

perform. This task is nothing less than the driving out of evil, and the bringing of the whole man into obedience to Christ. One part of this conquest cannot be accomplished without the aid of death. The body cannot be born again in this life; we cannot enter a second time into our mother's womb and be born again. Nothing can effect the regeneration or new birth of the body but death, the grave, and the resurrection. The soul is born again from the womb of Baptism; the body is born again from the womb of the grave. In this life, we possess a regenerate soul in an unregenerate body,—a soul born again in a body not born again; hence the conflict within. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."¹

Baptismal grace aids the soul in the subduing of the body. At every conquest the spirit grows stronger, whilst the flesh becomes weaker. Thus, going on from strength to strength, the man becomes by degrees "dead unto sin, but alive unto God,"² the likeness of God growing more distinct and becoming more fully developed. Then death takes place, followed, after a solemn pause, by the resurrection; when the regenerate soul, united for ever to the regenerate body, comes "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."³

¹ Gal. v. 17.² Rom. vi. 11.³ Eph. iv. 13.

The Holy Scriptures clearly teach that Holy Baptism washes away sin in those who rightly receive it.¹ In infants, the fault of birth-sin, in adults, the fault also of actual sin, is washed away. Moreover, Baptism introduces the soul into a condition in which, upon repentance, forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism is assured. The words of the Nicene Creed, "I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins," mean literally "I acknowledge one Baptism into the remission of sins."

If the reader has never thanked God for his Baptism, let him neglect this duty no longer; let him make the Church's words his own—"I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: and I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."²

¹ See Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16. ² *The Church Catechism.*

LECTURE V.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

INTRODUCTION.

“The tree of life in the midst of the garden.”—*Gen.* ii. 9.

BY the fall, man not only lost the likeness of God, but also access to the tree of life. We have seen that the likeness of God was a supernatural gift, added to our original nature, for the guidance and enlightenment of the whole man. The tree of life, mentioned in *Gen.* ii. 9, was a mysterious tree, thought by some to have borne a sacramental fruit. By eating of this fruit, man was not liable to death, and “the breath of life”¹ was sustained. It appears to have been the safeguard of man’s immortality.

By the fall, both these great gifts were forfeited. The likeness of God being lost, sin entered in, and access to the tree of life was in mercy forbidden.² Had this access to the tree of life been allowed after the fall, man

¹ *Gen.* ii. 7.

² *Gen.* iii. 22 to end.

would have lived for ever in his fallen state. Death mercifully breaks the spell, and sets man free.

From the history immediately following the account of the fall, we learn that the double loss to which it led is a terrible reality. The murdered Abel, and the fugitive Cain with hands stained with a brother's blood, and a soul burdened with guilt, show us the awful result of the sin of our first parents.¹

We have regarded the Incarnation as the remedy for the fall. God Himself came to visit His ruined world. The Creator came to recreate. He, "by whom all things were made, for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man." God became Man that He might restore the likeness of God, and bring back immortality to man. These great blessings He bestows through His sacred human nature.

In order that man may receive these restored gifts, it is necessary that he should come into, and continue in, living touch with the sacred Manhood of Jesus. Through the sacraments this vital union is secured. The sacraments are the extension of the Incarnate Life of Christ,—the means whereby our Incarnate Lord places and keeps the soul in union with His sacred human nature.

¹ Gen. iv.

In Holy Baptism, we receive the germ of the likeness of God ; which, fostered by grace and a holy life, will develop, and thus transform the whole man.

In Holy Communion, we receive "the living Bread which came down from heaven," the very Author of grace Himself, by feeding upon whom, we "shall live for ever."¹

Thus, we see that the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are, in a most real sense, extensions of the Incarnate Life of our Lord ; for they convey to the soul those very gifts of God which were lost by the fall—the likeness of God, and the food of immortality.

Let us observe that we are dealing with spiritual things, affecting the soul or spiritual part of man. Holy Baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh."² The divine likeness is not formed in a man's flesh, but in his soul. The body is not born again in baptism as Nicodemus thought ;³ the new birth is that of the soul. The Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is not given for sustaining the bodily life, as the Jews thought who strove with Jesus when He spake of Holy Communion ;⁴ it is the food of the soul.

As the tree of life was "in the midst of the garden"⁵ of Eden, so now is the Blessed

¹ St. John vi. 51.

³ St. John iii. 4.

⁵ Gen. ii. 9.

² 1 S. Peter iii. 21.

⁴ St. John vi. 52.

Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in the midst of the Church of God. It is the central act of worship, for it is the central act of communion between God and the soul. It is the most frequently celebrated of all the sacraments, and therefore accessible to all.

It is of this greatest of the sacraments that we are about to speak in the following lectures, and that in some detail.

LECTURE VI.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

ITS NECESSITY.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.”—*St. John vi. 53.*

THESE are the words of Jesus Christ, in which He teaches us, in plain and solemn language, that the Communion of His body and blood is a necessity to the life of the soul.

Although St. Paul¹ speaks of man being composed of spirit, soul, and body, yet in other parts of Holy Scripture the term ‘soul’ is often applied to the whole of man’s immaterial being. Thus we may say quite truly that man is a being composed of soul and body.²

¹ 1 Thess. v. 23.

² “The first great and natural division which the sacred writers make, is that of body and soul—the material and the immaterial parts of man; and this is regarded as an exhaustive division, as it really is, admitting of no third part. The parts of it are really separable; they will be separated at death, and reunited in the resurrection.”—Moberly’s *Sermons on the Beatitudes*, i. p. 8.

Each of these parts of man's being has its needs, which must be supplied. The body needs air, light, food, and clothing; without which, there cannot be health to the body. The soul, too, has its needs, which must be supplied, lest it perish.

What are the needs of the soul? It is important that we should know, because the soul is the highest part of our being. It is the possession of a reasonable soul, which raises man above the beasts. If we neglect the soul, it will matter for ever, for the soul never dies. The death of the soul spoken of in Holy Scripture is not its destruction, or bringing to nothing; but it is the loss of God, its chief good.

“The soul lost is the death of the body,
God lost is the death of the soul.”¹

The death of the soul is the missing the end for which it was created. Yet there are some, who, whilst they take the greatest care of the body, grievously neglect the immortal soul. Their neglect lies chiefly in the starving of the soul; in denying it its proper food. Of such our Lord speaks when He says, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you.”²

Jesus Christ then proceeds to give His

¹ St. Augustine, *Serm.* xxviii.

² St. John vi. 27.

wonderful sermon concerning the Holy Communion. From the twenty-seventh verse to the end of the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, He speaks of the Communion of His body and blood. The great thought running through this long and solemn discourse, is that of the bread which the soul needs. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."¹

Speaking of the necessity of receiving this sacred food, Jesus adds, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."²

Our Blessed Lord is uttering a most solemn warning: He is leading us to think of our undying souls, and of their needs; He is leading men to compare the starvation of the body with that of the soul. His words signify—If you deprive your body of food, it will die of hunger, and there will be no life in you; if you deprive your soul of my body and blood, it, too, will die of hunger, and there will be no life in you.

It is quite plain that a man who is not a communicant, is guilty of an act of unspeakable cruelty to his own soul. "Ye have no life

¹ Verse 51.

² Verses 53, 54.

in you." "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."¹ The man who refuses to eat, and so dies of starvation, is guilty of the sin of suicide. There is a suicide of the soul, more awful than that of the body. What greater folly than to allow the soul to pine away and to perish with hunger, when this tree of life, the Holy Communion, is in the midst of the Church of God?

'I have a soul which was made to live for ever.'

'My soul must be fed, or it will perish.'

'The food of my soul is Christ's body and blood, which I may receive in the Holy Communion.'

These are great truths for every man to ponder, and to act upon.

¹ St. John v. 40.

LECTURE VII.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

THE REAL PRESENCE. (I.)

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”—*I Cor. x. 16.*

IT is the will of God that we should be fed with the body and blood of Christ. Not only was our Lord given for us on the cross, but He is also given to us in the Holy Communion. How great are the wonders of God's love, in this double gift of Himself!

It is not enough to think of Calvary, and to gaze in adoring love upon the sacred body, and the precious blood flowing from the wounds of Jesus; but, in some mysterious yet real sense, we are to eat that body and to drink that blood. Christ has bidden us eat and drink, and He has told us that unless we do thus feed upon Him, we have no life in us.

Since the life of the soul depends upon eating the flesh of Christ and drinking His blood, it

is good to ask, How shall we eat His body and drink His blood, that we may be saved from death, and find life for our souls? Where shall we find Jesus Christ, that we may feed upon Him?

To answer this question, we must go back in thought to the night before Jesus died. It was the evening of the first Maundy Thursday, and Jesus Christ was keeping the Passover with His disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem. Taking the unleavened cake, and the cup of mingled wine and water into His sacred hands, He consecrated them by divine power to become His very flesh and blood. "Take, eat; this is my body . . . Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood. . . ." ¹ The words of God Incarnate are creative words; "He spake, and it was done." ²

So if we ask, Where shall we find the food of the soul, the body and blood of Christ? the reply is,—Under the forms of bread and wine in the Holy Communion. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (or participation) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (or participation) of the body of Christ?" ³

This text speaks of a cup which is Christ's blood, and of bread which is His body. Thus we see, that in the Holy Sacrament there

¹ St. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28.

³ 1 Cor. x. 16.

² Psalm xxxiii. 9.

are two parts. The bread and the cup form one part: the body and the blood of Christ form the other part. We know these parts of the Holy Sacrament as the outward part, and the inward part. The outward part, which can be seen, touched, and tasted by our bodily senses, is bread and wine: the inward part, which cannot be so seen, touched, or tasted, is Christ's body and blood. There are two ways of speaking of the Holy Communion, just as there are two ways of speaking of a coin. We may describe the size, shape, or marks of a coin; or we may speak of its value, which is the main thing.

In the Catechism the question is asked, What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper? The answer given is, Bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received. What is the inward part, or thing signified? The answer is, The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful¹ in the Lord's Supper.

It is quite plain that bread and wine cannot feed the soul; they are the food of the body: we might feed on these if we had no souls.

¹ The term 'faithful' in this answer, does not mean those only who have faith, but rather it is the old expression for the baptized, who form the Church. In article xix. the Church is described as 'a congregation of faithful men,' but all members of the Church have not faith. The answer really means, that the body and the blood of Christ are truly received by the communicants.

The body and blood of Christ are the food of the soul. The use of the bread and wine is to convey to the soul the body and the blood of Christ, and to be the pledge to assure us that the soul *does* receive Christ in the Holy Communion. We are not left to our own feelings in this matter. Each communicant can say, When I eat that bread and drink that cup, I eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

St. Paul, who wrote these words, was not a Christian until some time after our Lord's ascension. So great an importance did Jesus Christ attach to the Sacrament of His body and blood, that He made a special revelation to St. Paul concerning it.¹ It is from this account of the institution that we learn, that all that our Lord had at first ordained, was to be continued in the Church until the day of judgment. St. Paul adds, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."² It was the intention of our Lord in giving the Holy Communion, that the ministers of His Church should do as He had done, until the end of the world; consecrating, by His authority and the power of His Spirit, bread and wine to be His body and blood.

¹ See I Cor. xi. 23, etc.

² I Cor. xi. 26.

There is an incident related in the Gospels, which is helpful to realizing our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament. The multitude thronged our Lord. A woman, afflicted with a disease of long standing, desired to approach Him, hoping to be healed. With difficulty she forced her way through the crowd, and touched the hem of His garment. Immediately she was healed. Our Blessed Lord, knowing what had happened, asked, "Who touched me?" The woman had only touched the clothes of Jesus; but, in touching His clothes, she had touched Him.¹ It is even so in the Holy Communion. The bread and wine are the sacramental clothes of Christ, veiling His sacred presence. Touching them, the devout communicant touches Christ Himself. In this way we ought ever to regard our communions. We should not so much prepare to go to a sacred service, as to meet a divine person. If our Lord's invitation in Communion is, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled;" it is also, "Come unto Me."²

¹ St. Luke viii. 43, etc.

² Prov. ix. 5; St. Matt. xi. 28.

LECTURE VIII.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

THE REAL PRESENCE. (II.)

“How can these things be?”—*St. John* iii. 9.

SO far we have considered the Why, and the What, of the sacrament of Holy Communion. We have thought of its necessity, and of its reality. There is still another question which we shall do well to consider—the How of the sacrament—“How can these things be?”

When Jesus Christ was upon earth, He was a living sacrament. He was true God and true Man in One Person. There was the Manhood, which could be seen and touched; and there was the hidden Godhead, “for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”¹ The Godhead was veiled in the Manhood. Thus, He is sometimes spoken of as the Son of Man, and sometimes as the Son of God; for He is both in One Person. It is

¹ Col. ii. 9.

even so with the sacrament of Holy Communion. Sometimes it is spoken of as bread and wine, and sometimes it is spoken of as the body and blood of Christ; for it is both in one sacrament.

Jesus Christ is God in the form of Man.

Holy Communion is Christ's body and blood under the forms of bread and wine.

The Manhood of Jesus Christ veiled the Godhead.

The bread and wine in Holy Communion veil the body and blood of Christ.

The Godhead and the Manhood of Christ are united in His One Person.

The body and blood of Christ and the bread and wine form one sacrament.

Thus, a right belief in the Incarnation, is most helpful to a right belief in the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. A right belief in Christ as God-made-Man, helps us to a right belief in the Holy Communion as the body and blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine.

Let us go on to ask, How was God made Man? When we have answered this question, it will be less difficult to say how bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ.

When the angel announced to the Blessed Virgin that God would become incarnate, she asked, "How shall this be?" The angel replied, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall

overshadow thee . . ."¹ The answer which the angel gave to Mary's question, is the true answer to a like question concerning the presence of Christ in the Holy Communion. The bread and wine become the body and blood of the Lord—how shall this be? At our Lord's words, "This is my body . . . This is my blood . . .," the Holy Ghost overshadows the bread and wine, and thus they become the earthly veils of the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ.²

This coming of the Holy Ghost to overshadow the bread and wine is called Consecration. The prayer in which Christ becomes sacramentally present as our food in the Sacrament, is called 'the Prayer of Consecration.' God's priest says the words and performs the actions which Christ appointed: the Holy Spirit does the rest. At the words, "This is my body, This is my blood," the Holy Spirit works the change; the bread and wine become that which they were not before,—they become the body and blood of Christ.

We must not forget that our Lord is the true priest at each consecration of the Holy Communion. As such, He is present, as the unseen

¹ St. Luke i. 34, 35.

² "The bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly."—St. Irenæus, *Against Heresies*. Bk. iv. 18, 5.

minister, to speak the words and to consecrate the gifts of bread and wine. Whatever is done at the altar in His Name, He is present as the doer of it.

Consecration separates a thing from a common to a holy use—from man's use to God's use. The common use of bread and wine is to feed the body. The holy use, to which our Lord by His Spirit separates them, is to be the means of conveying His body and blood to the souls of the faithful. By consecration, our Lord, already present as the true priest, adopts the Church's gifts of bread and wine to become His sacred body and blood.

Man's faith does not cause the presence of our Lord in the Holy Communion. Man's faith is needed to *discern* His presence, but it does not bring it about. If the receiving of Christ in the Holy Sacrament depended upon our faith, we should never know whether we had received the sacred Gift or not. Who would be so presumptuous as to think that his faith was sufficient to bring the body and blood of Christ to his soul? Neither is it by eating and drinking, that the bread and wine become to us Christ's body and blood. He is there, before we draw nigh to kneel at the altar. He is present in the Holy Sacrament, whether we eat or not, whether we receive or not. The sacramental presence of Jesus Christ is brought about by a power from without, acting upon the bread and wine, and making

them to become the body and blood of Christ, before man draws near to receive, and in spite of his belief or unbelief.

On account of this great truth of the Real Presence, the Christian will ever approach the Holy Communion with profound reverence. To go to Communion in a state of sin, and without preparation, is as irreverent as it is dangerous.¹ Reverence for our Lord's sacramental presence has led the Church from the very first, to urge the duty of receiving the Holy Communion before breaking the fast. This is a custom which should never be set aside, except under absolute necessity.

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 28, etc.

LECTURE IX.

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE.

THE MEMORIAL BEFORE GOD. (I.)

“This do in remembrance of me.”—*St. Luke* xxii. 19.

THERE is a view of the Holy Sacrament of which hitherto we have said nothing. It is that view which regards it as a sacrifice. Of this we will now speak.

There are many names given to the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood. The most ancient of these is the name ‘Eucharist,’ derived from a Greek word signifying ‘thanksgiving.’ The term ‘Lord's Supper,’ has been used in the Prayer Book to describe the Holy Communion. It is more than doubtful if St. Paul, in using this expression in 1 Cor. xi. 20, is alluding to the Holy Sacrament at all. It is most probable that he is referring to the love-feast, which in very early days, though distinct from the Holy Communion, was usually associated with it. So far, in these lectures, we have generally used the expression ‘Holy Communion,’ for we have been dwelling upon

the Sacrament as a feast, in which Christ gives Himself to be the food of the soul. As we are now to consider the Sacrament as a sacrifice, we will use the term 'Eucharist.'

When our Blessed Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist, He bade His apostles and all who should follow them, "This do in remembrance of me."

The Greek word for "do," is one which was very frequently used in the Greek version of the Old Testament for "offer."¹ It is so used in the following passages, to which the reader may refer for himself, Exod. xxix. 36, 38, 39, 41; Lev. ix. 7, 16, 22; xiv. 19, etc. In each of these places, the word translated "offer," represents the word used by our Lord when He said, "do this."

The Greek word for "remembrance," has likewise a distinctly sacrificial meaning. It is used but twice in the Old Testament, and but four times in the New Testament. Three times in the New Testament the reference is to the Holy Eucharist. Let us briefly examine the passages where the Greek word translated "remembrance" is used apart from the Holy Eucharist. By this means, we shall best discover our Lord's meaning in speaking of

¹ The Greek word for "do" which our Lord used, is found more than eighty times in the Greek version of the Old Testament, where the authorised version translates "offer," "sacrifice," "make an offering," etc. See Appendix, Note i., to Bishop Hamilton's Charge, 1867. Fifth Edition.

the Holy Sacrament as "a remembrance" of Himself.

In Lev. xxiv. 5, 6, 7, we read, "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof, . . . and thou shalt set them in two rows . . . upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for A MEMORIAL, even an offering made by fire UNTO THE LORD." This passage relates to the shewbread, which was placed out of sight of the people in the holy place. The twelve cakes were to be for a memorial before the Lord, not for a memorial before man. God said, "Thou shalt set upon the table shewbread BEFORE ME alway."¹ The purpose of the twelve cakes of the shewbread, was to put God in mind of the twelve tribes which formed His chosen people. The word translated "memorial" represents the word used by our Lord when He said, "This do in remembrance of me."

In Numbers x. 10, we read, "In the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for A MEMORIAL BEFORE YOUR GOD: I am the Lord your God."² The word here translated "memorial," is the same as that used by our

¹ Exod. xxv. 30.

² See also verse 9.

Lord, and translated "remembrance." It is again used of a memorial, not before man, but before God.

In Heb. x. 3, we read, "But in those sacrifices there is A REMEMBRANCE again made of sins every year." The allusion is to the Jewish sacrifices offered yearly on the day of atonement. These sacrifices were offered to God, to procure pardon of the sins of the priesthood and of the nation. The High Priest entered the holy of holies, where, unseen by man, he made "a remembrance of sins," before God. The same word is here again used.

We have now examined the only three passages in the Bible in which the Greek word for "remembrance" is found, apart from the accounts of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. In each case it is used of a remembrance before God, and not before man. It is therefore reasonable to suppose, that in those instances in which it is used of the Holy Eucharist, it is intended to express the same meaning as it has elsewhere in Holy Scripture, namely, a memorial before God.

Our Lord, in saying, "This do in remembrance of me," used language bearing a sacrificial meaning. His words mean, "Offer this as my memorial before God," or, "Put God in remembrance of me by offering this sacrifice." It is right, therefore, to regard the Eucharist as a sacrifice, as well as a feast.

The Holy Eucharist, as a sacrament, is an extension of the Incarnate Life of Christ, and that not only as a feast, but also as a sacrifice. Our Blessed Lord became Man that He might offer Himself as the sacrifice for the sin of the world. In the Holy Eucharist, we have a continuous application of the one meritorious sacrifice of the cross. In the Holy Eucharist, we now commemorate the same sacrifice which was offered on Calvary. Repeated in pain and bloodshedding it never can be, but represented it must be, until the return of Jesus Christ to judgment. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." ¹

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

LECTURE X.

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE.

THE MEMORIAL BEFORE GOD. (II.)

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.”—
1 Cor. xi. 26.

IN our last lecture, we examined the language which our Lord used in instituting the Holy Eucharist. We saw that the words “This do in remembrance of me” may be taken to signify, “Offer this as my sacrificial memorial before God.”

There is a fact concerning our Lord’s sacred body after He rose from the dead, which calls for special remark. He rose from the tomb bearing in His body the marks of the five wounds, caused by the crucifixion and the soldier’s spear. It was through the unbelief of St. Thomas, that this fact is so specially recorded. St. Thomas was absent when our Lord first appeared to the assembled apostles. On hearing from their lips the wondrous story of His resurrection, he withheld belief until his eyes should rest upon, and his hands should

touch, the wounds with which he knew our Lord's sacred form to be marked. On a second appearance, Jesus gave to St. Thomas the evidence he desired; "Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side."¹

With His sacred body thus scarred, our Lord rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven; where He is, as Man, "a priest for ever,"² presenting His wounded humanity before the face of God. St. John saw Him thus engaged, for he beheld in heaven "a Lamb as it had been slain;"³ he saw Jesus, the Lamb of God, marked with the death-wounds. In human form He shall return to judgment, and by the sacred wounds from which His precious blood flowed, His enemies will recognise Him. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him."⁴

At this moment Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is in heaven, a priest for ever, continually pleading His life and death before God. His sacred form, marked with wounds, the tokens of His death and passion, pleads in the presence of the Eternal Father. It is as if He proclaimed, "In human nature, by these wounds, I delivered man from eternal death, and purchased pardon and grace to save."

¹ St. John xx. 24-30.

² Heb. vii. 17.

³ Rev. v. 6.

⁴ Ibid i. 7.

Our Blessed Lord's pleading above is a great and abiding reality. In heaven, the Son of Man is continually reminding the Father of His work on earth, and offering Himself for us men and for our salvation.

We have dwelt at some length upon this subject; for, until the truth of the eternal priesthood of the Incarnate Son of God is grasped, there can be no right understanding of the Holy Eucharist as a memorial sacrifice before God.

In the Holy Eucharist, the Church on earth joins in that which Jesus Christ does in heaven. In the Holy Eucharist, the Church presents Jesus Christ to the Eternal Father; putting God in mind of Christ, and His work for man: she "shews the Lord's death" to God. In the Holy Eucharist, we make a solemn remembrance of Christ's death before God on earth, as Christ Himself does in heaven. It has been asked—In the Holy Eucharist, are we taken up into heaven, or is heaven brought down to earth? It is difficult to say which it is, but it is right to consider the Holy Service as one with the worship of heaven. In celebrating the Christian Sacrifice, it is as though we were taken up into heaven itself for a brief space, to join in Christ's ceaseless pleading before the throne of God. In the Holy Eucharist we take our share in the heavenly worship of the Lamb.

Wherever our Lord is present, there He is

to be worshipped. After the consecration, it is right to worship Jesus sacramentally present in our midst. But, at the same time, it must be remembered, that the whole act is an offering to the Eternal Father, and our worship is specially directed to Him. If we refer to the ancient Liturgies, or Services for celebrating the Holy Eucharist, we find that, with the rarest exceptions, the prayers and acts of worship are addressed to God the Father, and not to our Blessed Lord. In agreement with this, all the Collects in the Prayer Book, with three exceptions, are so addressed.

Our Blessed Lord instituted the Holy Sacrament, not only that He might feed our souls, and sanctify our bodies, with His flesh and blood, but also that we might plead the memorial of His sacrifice before the face of God. The Holy Eucharist is the only public service of divine appointment. It is the Church's central act of worship, and no Lord's day is well spent upon which the Christian has not been present to participate in the Lord's own service.

LECTURE XI.

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE.

THE MEMORIAL BEFORE MAN.

“To the end that we should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us. . . . He hath instituted and ordained Holy Mysteries, as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort.”—*Exhortation in Holy Communion Service.*

FROM the accounts of the first celebration of the Holy Eucharist, recorded in the New Testament, we learn that when Christ gave His body and blood to His apostles, He said, “This do in remembrance of Me.”¹ When the Church administers the Holy Sacrament, she says to each communicant, “The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.” She uses a like form in administering

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

the Cup, "Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, etc." The whole service is spoken of in the Prayer Book as "a perpetual memory of His precious death." The Catechism answers the question, "Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?" by saying, "For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby."

The word 'remembrance' means, a calling to mind, a putting in mind, a reminder. The Holy Eucharist is a calling to mind of Jesus Christ, of His whole life, of His work, and of His sufferings and death in particular. But who is put in mind, who is to be reminded of all this?

The answer to this important question is,—First and chiefly, as we have seen, God is put in mind; and then, secondly, man is to be reminded. Of the Holy Eucharist as a memorial before God, we have already spoken. Now, we will dwell upon its less important aspect, as a memorial before man.

One purpose of the Holy Eucharist is to keep us mindful of Jesus and His love; that we may have opportunity to confess Him before men as our crucified Saviour. We all know the value and the use of keepsakes; may be some trinket, or a photograph, or a lock of hair, recalling the memory of the absent or departed, saving us from forgetting

those we love. Such, in a higher and more sacred sense, is the Holy Eucharist.

During the celebration of the Eucharist, certain words are said, and certain things are done, to remind the worshippers of the sufferings and the death of our Blessed Lord.

1. We hear, in the Consecration Prayer, an account of our redemption by Christ's offering of Himself upon Calvary, and of His command for the continual commemoration of His great sacrifice until His second coming.

2. There is the mingling of water with wine in the cup.¹ This solemn act speaks of the piercing of our Lord's side on the cross, and of the blood and water which flowed from the wound. It is a circumstance to which St. John attaches a special importance.²

3. Again, there is the administration of the Sacrament in both kinds; a privilege which we alone in Western Christendom enjoy. The body and the blood of Christ are given separately. This division speaks of the death of Jesus. The blood separated from the body of a victim, tells of its death. The expression "to shed blood," means to kill.³

Thus, we see that there is much in the holy service to remind us of our Blessed Lord, of His death and passion. It is one of the sins

¹ The cup, or chalice, which our Lord consecrated to be His blood, contained wine mingled with water; for the wine used at the Passover was always so mixed.

² St. John xix. 34-38. ³ See Gen. ix. 5, 6.

of those who never participate in the Holy Eucharist, that they slight the memory of their Saviour. To abuse a memory is the worst of slights. Well may the devout worshipper say:—

“ O sacred Feast ! wherein Christ is received ;
 The memory of His passion is brought to our remembrance ;
 Our souls are fulfilled with grace,
 And the pledge of eternal glory is given unto us.”

But, as we have said, much more is conveyed by the word ‘ remembrance,’ than the reminding of ourselves. The first and proper meaning of the word, as used by our Lord, is not the reminding of man, but the reminding of God. We may say that, in the holy service, man is reminded in order that he may remind God. With this agrees the old prayer found in many of the early Liturgies, or Services for the Holy Eucharist:—

Wherefore, O Lord, we thy servants and holy people, mindful of the blessed passion of the same thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, His resurrection from the dead, and His glorious ascension into heaven, offer unto thy divine Majesty of thine own gifts, a pure offering, a holy offering, a spotless offering, the Holy Bread of eternal life, and the Cup of everlasting salvation.

Staley, V.

232.15Q

St 16

Plain Words on the

Incarnation and the
Sacraments

232.15Q

St 16



C0-AYL-396